TECHNOLOGY CENTRE PRAGUE

BEYOND BIGGER BUDGETS

Building a sustainable R&I funding mix after 2027

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SUSTAINABILITY OF R&I FUNDING QUESTIONS



How much money will be available?



How large will the budget of the next Framework Programme be?



How much funding will be available through cohesion policy?



How much will we be able to allocate from our national budgets?


ROAD
CLOSED

NOT ONLY A BUDGET QUESTION

R&I competes ever more directly with other legitimate priorities for public money

Ageing
pressure on social and healthcare systems

Climate and energy
the transition requires substantial investment

Defence and security
expenditure is rising significantly

Intergenerational fairness
affordable housing, infrastructure, societal resilience

Sustainability will depend on whether we can show convincingly that public R&I spending is

an investment in future prosperity, security and resilience

SUSTAINABILITY REDEFINED

Not preserving the current system unchanged, but a policy mix that keeps evolving

A sustainable policy mix can …

Maintain excellent capacities over the long term

Develop new opportunities

Mobilise additional resources

Reallocate funding to where the highest scientific, societal and economic value is created

Three mutually reinforcing pillars (TC analysis)

Financial
stable, predictable and diversified resources

Institutional
the ability to turn resources into quality results and impact

Talent
retaining and developing the people who make results possible

Source: TC Praha, Analysis of the sustainability of R&D&I funding after 2027 (2026)

FIVE CHANGES AFTER 2027

Shifts that will shape the funding architecture in Europe and in Czechia

1	From isolated programmes	→	**to an investment continuum**
2	From funding projects	→	**to funding strategic capacities**
3	From more R&I	→	**to more impact**
4	From separate sources	→	**to managed interfaces**
5	From single criteria	→	**to explicit strategic trade-offs**

FROM PROGRAMMES TO A CONTINUUM

Horizon Europe and the Competitiveness Fund should cover the path from research to deployment

Stages of the investment pathway



Investment discontinuity as one of the weaknesses of the Czech system.

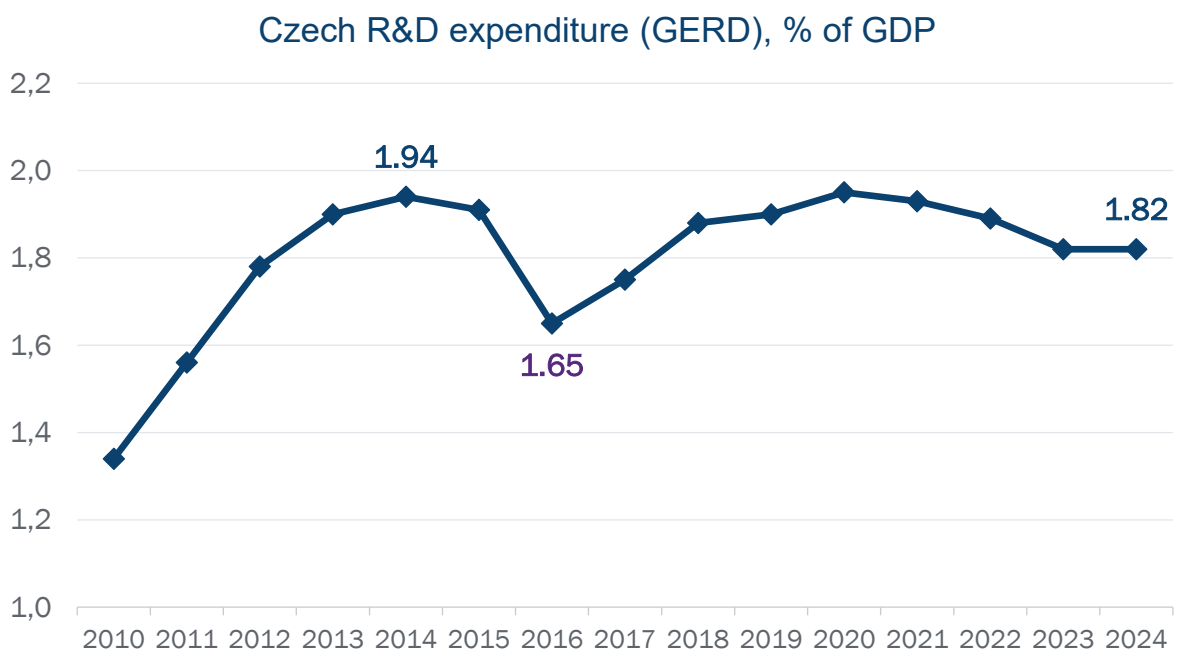
The public sector may finance the creation of knowledge or technology, while the mechanism needed to move it into the next stage is missing

It is not only about how to perform better in FP10 or how to access the ECF. The key question is whether we can create continuity between national instruments so that a good project does not come to an end simply because one funding programme has ended.

The task for the national mix: not to add more isolated programmes, but closing the gaps between them

FROM PROJECTS TO CAPACITIES

Infrastructure lives longer than a programming period, and funding cycles create peaks and gaps



Questions beyond 2028

2028 — Who pays for the new equipment?

2033 — Who pays for its upgrade?

Always — Who funds staff, data services and research management, and does it serve research and business users?

Strategic capacities

- People and careers
- Infrastructures
- Data and computing
- Technology transfer
- Research management

Sustainability is therefore not merely a question of project funding. It is a question of long-term investment in a system of R&I capabilities

FROM MORE R&I TO MORE IMPACT

Europe and Czechia share a paradox: strong science, weaker translation into value

Europe: strength, structure, scale

Strength — a global scientific power with strong institutions and infrastructures

Structure — fragmented across countries, regions and funding systems

Scale — limited translation into technology leadership, productivity and scale-up

Across-the-board increase

All allocations grow by the same percentage

Result: the current structure is preserved

Performance-linked funding

Additional money linked to performance, mobilising other resources or a defined strategic function

Result: the same investment transforms the system

A multiannual framework for the strategic core, with transparent rules

- Excellent teams
- Key infrastructures
- Capacities with a national function
- Periodic evaluation
- Reallocation
- Termination where justified

THE CHALLENGE IS AT THE INTERFACES

National programmes should do what European instruments and private investment cannot or should not do

EU ↔ national | **Research ↔ innovation** | **Public ↔ private** | **Project ↔ institutional**

What national programmes should do

Keep a critical mass
of strong teams

Prepare institutions
for competitive European proposals

Ensure continuity
between European projects

Co-finance
strategic European partnerships

Operate and renew
infrastructures over the long term

Bridge higher-risk stages
until a private investor engages

Not replicating Horizon Europe, but closing gaps and building absorptive capacity

MOBILISING PRIVATE CAPITAL

The state budget alone cannot close the gap; public money should leverage (not substitute) private investment

Europe moves beyond classic R&I programmes

- **European Competitiveness Fund:** combines public and private resources
- **European Innovation Act:** public demand, harmonised R&D procurement, IP valuation and IP-backed finance
- **EIB Group with member states and investors:** equity for scale-ups

A mix of functions and instruments, not only grant schemes



From research grants ⟶ to market-facing instruments

Public funding should be redesigned in a way that de-risks and mobilises private investment

STRATEGIC TRADE-OFFS

Sustainability means a balanced portfolio, not only what is politically visible today

Excellence ⟷ **Cohesion**	Should Widening compensate gaps, or build the capacity to compete without it?
Bottom-up research ⟷ **Strategic priorities**	How much room for investigator-driven research vs. missions?
International openness ⟷ **Security**	How to stay international as research security gains weight?
Long-term research ⟷ **Deployment**	How to stop competitiveness pressure from draining basic research?

The debate on R&I funding will be less about budgets and more about managing a portfolio of public investments

WHAT THE CZECH AND POSSIBLY ALSO OTHER NATIONAL SYSTEMS NEED

Four shifts for the national policy mix after 2027

1 Stability and predictability, not inertia

Multiannual funding for strategic capacities, with reallocation rules based on performance, quality and relevance

2 Complementarity with European funding

Close gaps and build absorptive capacity, rather than replicating Horizon Europe or compensating for cohesion cuts

3 Private capital and public demand

Grants, financial instruments, equity, guarantees, tax incentives and innovation procurement

4 Results, not the administrative cycle

Multiannual horizons, milestones, expert evaluation and the ability to continue, redirect or stop support

FROM DISTRIBUTING TO MANAGING

Sustainability is the long-term performance and adaptive capacity of the system

A system that distributes resources

A collection of individual budget lines

Preserving everything we currently fund

2027 as the risky end of a programming period

A system that manages an investment portfolio

R&I as one of key long-term strategic assets

Keeping performance and the ability to adapt

2027 as an opportunity to connect excellence, capacities, innovation and private capital

Sustainability is not the ability to preserve everything we fund, but the ability to keep performing and adapting as technologies, geopolitics, EU instruments and fiscal constraints change.

THANK YOU

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